3: Hinder G-5 (1933-1942) 1944 AF15 East China AF15

529 741 for playgrounds whenever through building demolition or some other chance an area might be temporarily cleared.

262 741 The financing of children's institutions in a time of rapidly rising costs proved difficult. Some were stimulated at times to make efforts to improve the diet. "An egg a child a week," "some oil each day" have been aims which in some instances have been met, only to find that the cost of eggs has doubled, and that of oil trebled, so that the former ration again became the rule. There was felt to be a need for the organisation in Shanghai of a Children's Community Chest, when the citizens would be challenged to give largely and generously to its children, and all organisations caring for children might benefit. Leadership in the community to better the situation of its children was not lacking, as the extensive services for homeless children show.

736 633 735 748 THE WORSENING OF the economic situation in the city following the outbreak of Pacific hostilities was followed, inevitably, by the abandonment of many children on the streets by those unable to care for them. Institutions which down through the years had been able to care for all children whom the police had taken in, found themselves unable to take more. Their financial situation with a steeply rising cost of living and the difficulty of obtaining essential commodities in sufficient quantities precluded the enlargement of their responsibilities. The Division was therefore faced with the task of finding temporary care for the abandoned children and of evolving a general plan to deal with the issue. A camp which had been established in 1940 by the Salvation Army with the assistance of the Council to try to rehabilitate street beggars was used as the temporary place of shelter, and a programme of home finding with a staff of fifteen social workers was embarked upon.

"Home finding" had two aspects. It sought to trace the natural homes or the relatives of the abandoned children. By every conceivable device social workers tried to obtain a clue from them as to their former life. If a child had been lost, the reunion between the child and the parents if the latter could be traced was often a touching one. If the child had been abandoned, effort was made to solve the family problem in some other way, for at all costs that complete break with its own family must be avoided which must otherwise mean a lifetime of standing alone. It was not easy

3: Hinder G-5 (1933-1942) 1944 AF15 East China AF15

to find employment as a means of assisting the family, but a friend or relative could frequently be found who, if challenged to do so by a skilled social worker, was ready to help out. There were no public funds to draw upon as is normal family casework in western countries; but there was being developed family case work on the China pattern, an attempt to use the close family bonds between relatives to induce help of the unfortunate. This kind of friendly help of course goes on day after day without stimulus from without; the difference was that the Division tried to harness it for the help of children in the emergency. The second phase of home finding sought to apply more widely the experimental beginnings in adoption approved by the authorities, the plan referred to earlier in this chapter. With more social workers on the task and with a gradually growing sense of responsibility on the part of the community for its children, as many as fourteen applications by adoptive parents were made on one day in June 1942 to adopt children.

This much more extensive programme than formerly attempted —a programme induced only by the emergency which in eight months left hundreds of children for whom adjustment had to be found in the hands of police—proved the value of early experimental beginnings. It cannot of course be claimed that even this enlarged staff would be able to handle the situation. Hundreds of children would continue to be destitute and begging, hundreds dying on the streets.

THE REMARKABLE WORK which has been done by the Chinese Government and voluntary organisations in caring for the thousands of children deprived of parental care during large-scale hostilities in China from 1937 to the present time has certainly within it the germ of an adequate child care programme in the future. It is work which has been carried on through immense difficulties of finance in a period of inflation. In Free China, as in Shanghai, there is growing a recognition of the necessity for adequately trained social workers in child care. Many students prevented from returning to China by world hostilities and for the time being remaining in the United States and elsewhere are using the time to prepare themselves as specialists in this field. In West China a special course in training for child care work has been organised

3: Hinder G-5 (1933-1942) 1944 AF15 East China AF15

CHAPTER XI

SOME SPECIAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

ENOUGH HAS BEEN SAID of the housing congestion in normal times and of the great overcrowding arising from hostilities to indicate that Shanghai, despite its normal extensive industry and commerce, must contain many more persons than can find employment. There is a permanent problem of destitution, aggravated at some periods, slightly less perhaps at others, but always there. To the low-waged worker in Shanghai must be added the army of chronically unemployed and completely unemployable.

Recent studies of Shanghai dwell at length on the refugee problem following the outbreak of hostilities in 1937.[1] After five years, a hard core of refugees remained, despite consistent efforts in the spring months of 1939 and 1940 to disperse aggregations of those in "refugee camps." The Shanghai Refugee Relief Association, which was organised in 1938 to take over work formerly handled by the Shanghai International Red Cross Committee, continued till the middle of 1942 to collect and disburse funds for the support of approximately 15,000 refugees, a residue of old, young, invalid and unemployable.

In addition to those cared for in camps, hundreds of destitute persons roamed the streets after 1937, miserably clad, often in the final stages of exhaustion. The numbers increased considerably after December 1941. These aggravated Shanghai's permanent beggar problem. Begging is endemic in many Oriental countries. Especially at festival times in the vicinity of temples the lame, the halt, the sick and the blind display themselves to the pious who make pilgrimages, relying on pity and the belief that it is an act of virtue to dispense alms. Whether caused by hunger and want or engaged in as a chosen profession, begging is chronic.

Toward the end of 1940 the Shanghai Municipal Council, the Salvation Army and the Shanghai Rotary Club attempted to deal

[1] See particularly R. W. Barnett, *Economic Shanghai: Hostage to Politics*, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1941.

3: Hinder G-5 (1933-1942) 1944 AF15 East China AF15

735 747 constructively with the problem by establishing a special camp for beggars. The police removed from the streets those found begging, men, women and children, and handed them over to the Salvation Army for care. Huts were erected on land made available by the Council, and the scheme was inaugurated in January 1941. To defray expenses of building the camp, the Council allocated funds from the voluntary entertainment levy which had been collected during the post-hostility period and handed over in part to the Shanghai Refugee Relief Association for disbursement among organisations caring for refugees.

735 747 633 166 IN GENERAL, as mentioned before, the Council took the view that it was not able to provide "poor relief." Its revenues from taxation were limited because its powers of taxation were restricted. No poor law rate could be levied. It was argued that in a city to which (because of the comparatively safe areas and the lure of possible employment) thousands had drifted in past decades from nearby densely populated provinces, to have embarked on poor relief would have been to encourage the arrival of many more destitute persons. In general, relief was left to private charitable organisations, both Chinese and foreign.

Nevertheless, the Council contributed to relief by presenting grants-in-aid to hospitals and institutions caring for the destitute. In particular, as we have seen, it made contributions to child welfare institutions to care for the young people whom police removed from the streets and otherwise found in need, and who very often were without relatives or friends.

766 Much is made in certain studies of Shanghai of the "exposed corpse" situation. Figures of unwanted corpses picked up on the streets did not, however, represent necessarily deaths from starvation and exposure only.[2] There were indeed many such cases, but there were also many others where the family of the deceased lacked funds for a coffin and other funeral expenses. Then it was to a Chinese benevolent burial society that the family looked. In such cases the corpse was placed where it would be collected and

[2] Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 46, reports that in the International Settlement alone over 100,000 exposed corpses were disposed of in 1938. In 1939 the figure was 72,000. The numbers in 1942 must have been very high. There were certain places in the city where those dying of disease and starvation dragged themselves, to die with their fellows.